PALGO JOURNAL OF EDUCATION RESEARCH (PJER)
http://www.palgojournals.org/PJER/Index.htm

REVIEWERS GUIDE

PART A: ***Editorial Office Only***

SECTION I

MANUSCRIPT REVIEW

Title: Politics of Epistemology and the Herdersmen Insurgency in Nigeria: The (Im)possibility of Islamisation Agenda

Author: EZE, George Ogazi Mani (PhD)

GENERAL COMMENTS

This manuscript addresses a highly significant and timely topic concerning the herders-farmers conflict in Nigeria through an innovative epistemological lens. The author demonstrates commendable ambition in attempting to bridge multiple theoretical frameworks and empirical discourses. The work makes a valuable contribution to understanding how knowledge construction shapes conflict narratives in Nigeria. However, the manuscript would benefit from enhanced clarity in presentation, more rigorous methodological transparency, and careful proofreading to address grammatical inconsistencies that occasionally impede comprehension.

ABSTRACT

Strengths:

- Provides a comprehensive overview of the study's scope and approach
- Clearly articulates the central problematic: the epistemological construction of the herdersmen insurgency
- Appropriately positions the study within broader debates on religion, identity, and governance

Areas for Improvement:

The abstract is somewhat lengthy (approximately 250 words) and could be condensed for greater impact. Consider reducing it to 200-250 words maximum.

Grammatical Corrections:

1. "Framed within the politics of epistemology" → Consider: "Employing the politics of epistemology as an analytical framework"

2. "how such narratives sustain or undermine the (im)possibility of an Islamisation agenda" → "how such narratives either sustain or undermine the possibility of an Islamisation agenda"
3. "the Islamisation thesis, though epistemically potent, is entangled with" → "the Islamisation thesis, though epistemically compelling, remains entangled with"
4. "we must build knowledge systems that sincerely unite security concerns" → "we must develop knowledge systems that genuinely integrate security concerns"

INTRODUCTION

Strengths:

- Well-contextualized opening that situates the conflict historically and politically
- Strong justification for the epistemological approach
- Clear articulation of the study's significance and delimitations
- Transparent acknowledgment of scope limitations

Areas for Improvement:

The introduction would benefit from a clearer roadmap of the paper's structure. Consider adding a brief paragraph outlining how the subsequent sections unfold.

Grammatical Corrections:

1. "Recurrent narratives inside political rhetoric" → "Recurring narratives within political rhetoric"
2. "have not merely guided public opinion; they have also reshaped policy and redirected diplomatic calculations" → This sentence is excellent; no change needed
3. "Epistemology-concerned with the making, certifying, and contesting of knowledge provides" → "Epistemology—concerned with the production, validation, and contestation of knowledge—provides"
4. "the essay contends that a full apprehension of the crisis" → "this study argues that a comprehensive understanding of the crisis"
5. "Positioning knowledge-production in this broader field" → "By situating knowledge production within this broader context"
6. "For scholars, it enriches debates on epistemology, conflict studies, and religion in African politics" → (No change needed—well expressed)
7. "Be stretched towards ranching" → This sentence appears incomplete or corrupted. Please revise: "Whether policy responses lean toward ranching, grazing reserves, ecological restoration, or regional militias and religious interventions, the prescriptions offered often reflect the underlying causal narrative deemed most credible in any given context"
8. "it ends regulated uncertainty" → "it engenders sustained uncertainty"
9. "circumscribes, and at present, the capacity of Nigero a shared, commmon narrative" → "circumscribes Nigeria's capacity to develop a shared, common narrative" (also correct "commmon" to "common")

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Strengths:

- Clearly identifies the epistemological disjuncture as the core problem
- Effectively distinguishes between structural causes and ideological framings

Areas for Improvement:

The problem statement contains several convoluted sentences that reduce clarity. Simplification would enhance accessibility.

Grammatical Corrections:

1. "Be stretched towards ranching, grazing reserves, forest-savannah-savanna conversion, or to regional militias and clerical jihad" → Please revise this entire passage for clarity
2. "the prescriptions on offer have become an epiphenomenon of the designer cause labelled most credible" → "the policy prescriptions offered often reflect the causal narrative considered most credible"
3. "control of the terms and symbols of debate is tightly policed, with broadcast outlets elevating and demoting districts of memory" → "control over discourse is contested, with media outlets selectively amplifying certain narratives"
4. "it ends regulated uncertainty, fosters mutual distrust, and circumscribes, and at present, the capacity of Nigero a shared" → "this generates sustained uncertainty, fosters mutual distrust, and currently constrains Nigeria's capacity to develop a shared"

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES & QUESTIONS

Strengths:

- Well-articulated and appropriately aligned with the study's scope
- Comprehensive coverage of key dimensions
- Clear progression from descriptive to analytical to prescriptive objectives

Suggestions: All objectives and questions are appropriate. No significant changes needed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Strengths:

- Innovative integration of three complementary theories
- Demonstrates sophisticated theoretical reasoning

Areas for Improvement:

Some passages in this section are overly dense and stylistically complex, which may alienate readers. Consider simplifying without losing theoretical depth.

Grammatical Corrections:

1. "When conflict takes the stage, the chosen frame accentuates a narrow set of cues from the wider reality, muffling counter-cues" → "When conflict emerges, the chosen frame highlights specific aspects of reality while suppressing alternative interpretations"
2. "a cavalcade of national-drama security" → "a national security crisis"
3. "this book shows" → "this study demonstrates"
4. "the aftereffects of colonial rule eviscerating land and inventing ethno-religious labels-continue" → "the aftereffects of colonial rule—including land appropriation and the construction of ethno-religious categories—continue"

5. "Such genealogical labour thus conveys a surplus of insight, in the sense that the very fabrications brought into being in the past now directed widely-discussed judgements" → "Such genealogical analysis reveals how colonial-era constructions continue to shape contemporary interpretations of violence"
6. "it does not refer to the world but proclaims what may be thought" → "it does not merely describe reality but determines what can be thought"
7. "pours forth through the multitemporal and multiscale voices of orators and emblems" → "emerges through diverse voices across political, religious, and media platforms"
8. "polished elite cafés, canonically approved clerical mediators" → "elite political actors, religious authorities"
9. "our analytical net brings taut signal to the tense differential" → "our analytical framework illuminates these tensions"
10. "the anataemia of the genealogy of the 'fact' stripped of imprint" → Please clarify or simplify this phrase

---

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strengths:

- Comprehensive coverage of relevant literature
- Good organization into thematic clusters (resource conflict, identity politics, religious conflict)
- Effective use of key scholars in the field

Areas for Improvement:

The review would benefit from more explicit identification of the research gap that this study fills.

Grammatical Corrections:

1. "The ongoing violence between farmers and herders in Nigeria has been simplified into three distinct discourses" → "The ongoing violence between farmers and herders in Nigeria has been analyzed through three distinct discourses"
2. "These are termed resource conflict, identity politics, and religious conflict" → (No change needed)
3. "that the land, water, and pasture that 'desertification and climate change', ecologically, migratory pastoralists" → "that land, water, and pasture affected by desertification and climate change are contested by migratory pastoralists"
4. "This explanation ties 'ecologically' and 'pastoralists' tightly to 'new' and 'clashing'" → Please revise for clarity
5. "The Jabba (Fulani) are frequently caricatured" → "The Fulani are frequently characterized"
6. "The touch of this frame is crucial but its risk is to gather the world controversy of religion" → "This frame is important, but it risks conflating global religious controversies with local resource disputes"
7. "lack of discourse and material the farmers' conflict" → "material and discursive dimensions of the farmers' conflict" (sentence appears incomplete)

METHODOLOGY

Strengths:

- Appropriate selection of qualitative design and CDA

- Clear justification for secondary data use
- Transparent about limitations
- Good alignment between methodology and research objectives

Areas for Improvement:

While the data sources are mentioned, more detail on the sampling strategy and specific texts analyzed would strengthen methodological rigor.

Grammatical Corrections:

1. "The study did not claim to represent all narratives but aimed to capture dominant discourses" → "This study does not claim to represent all narratives but rather aims to capture dominant discourses"
2. All other sentences in this section are well-constructed.

DATA PRESENTATION (TABLES 1-8)

Strengths:

- Creative use of tables to organize discursive data
- Clear categorization of actors and frames
- Comprehensive coverage of political, religious, media, and scholarly discourses

Areas for Improvement:

1. **Table formatting:** Some tables would benefit from more consistent formatting and clearer column headers
2. **Source documentation:** More specific citations (dates, page numbers) would enhance credibility
3. **Table 5:** The "Sample Evidence" column needs more specific examples

Grammatical Corrections:

Table 1:

- "And with the intention of Islamising the nation" → "with the alleged intention of Islamizing the nation"

Table 2:

- All entries are grammatically correct

Table 3:

- "Polarised public perception by selectively amplifying certain frames while neglecting others" → (No change needed)

Table 4:

- No grammatical errors noted

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Strengths:

- Insightful identification of four competing epistemologies
- Effective use of theoretical frameworks to interpret findings
- Balanced treatment of competing narratives

Areas for Improvement:

The analysis would benefit from more explicit connections between the empirical findings and the theoretical framework established earlier.

Grammatical Corrections:

1. "The analysis displayed multiplicity of competing epistemologies" → "The analysis reveals a multiplicity of competing epistemologies"
2. "The coexistence of these epistemologies demonstrates that 'truth' about the insurgency is neither singular nor stable" → (Excellent; no change needed)
3. "While religious leaders, international reports and southern-based media foreground an Islamisation agenda" → (No change needed)
4. "This highlights what Foucault (1980) calls the 'politics of truth'" → (Well expressed)
5. "Both herders and farmers have also been talked about as victims" → "Both herders and farmers are constructed as victims"
6. "These findings suggest that the discourse of Islamisation cannot be dismissed outright as mere propaganda, nor can it be fully dismissed as it carries tangible empirical inevitability" → "These findings suggest that while the Islamisation discourse cannot be dismissed as mere propaganda, neither can it be accepted as empirically inevitable"

DISCUSSION

Strengths:

- Systematic engagement with each research question
- Strong integration of findings with existing literature
- Sophisticated theoretical interpretation

Areas for Improvement:

Some theoretical discussions remain abstract. More concrete examples would enhance accessibility.

Grammatical Corrections:

1. "These are not merely descriptive; they are situation charged frameworks" → "These are not merely descriptive; they are politically charged frameworks"
2. "It is strategically useful in framing farmers as existential victims" → (No change needed)
3. "The Islamisation thesis, therefore, reflects what Said (1978) described in Orientalism" → (Well expressed)
4. "The Nigerian state's silence and avoidance of religious framing is a deliberate policy" → "The Nigerian state's silence and avoidance of religious framing represents a deliberate policy"
5. "Both herders and farmers are discourse victims" → "Both herders and farmers are discursively constructed as victims"

6. "The international perceptions (structural/ecological) and local perceptions (religious/identity) are starkly disjunct" → (No change needed)

CONCLUSIONS

Strengths:

- Clear summary of key findings
- Balanced and nuanced final position
- Avoids oversimplification

Grammatical Corrections:

1. "The Islamisation narrative functions beyond a discursive construct mobilised by political and religious actors to show slit empirically verified agenda" → "The Islamisation narrative functions as a discursive construct mobilized by political and religious actors rather than as an empirically verified agenda"
2. "It is more than symbolic power that risks trivialising the dispute" → "It operates as symbolic power that risks oversimplifying the conflict"
3. "The Nigerian state's silence and avoidance of religious framing is a deliberate policy of conflict avoidance" → (No change needed)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengths:

- Practical and actionable
- Grounded in the study's findings
- Multi-stakeholder approach

Suggestions: All recommendations are appropriate and well-articulated.

REFERENCES

Strengths:

- Includes key foundational and contemporary sources
- Good mix of theoretical and empirical literature
- Proper formatting generally followed

Areas for Improvement:

1. Several key references cited in-text are missing from the reference list:
    - Entman (1993) on framing theory
    - Said (1978) - Orientalism
    - Spivak (1990)
    - Foucault (1980)
    - Homer-Dixon (1999)
    - Abbass (2012)
    - Fairclough (1995)

    - van Dijk (1997)
    - Olayoku (2014)
    - Mamdani (1996)
    - Habermas (1989)
    - Goffman (1974)
    - Adamu (2021)
    - Akinyele (2020)
2. Ensure all in-text citations appear in the reference list and vice versa
3. Consider alphabetical ordering throughout

Correction needed:

- Add all missing references with complete bibliographic information

---

RATINGS

Criterion	Rating	Justification
Originality	**2 (Good)**	The epistemological approach to analyzing the herdersmen conflict is relatively novel in Nigerian scholarship, though it builds on established theoretical frameworks.
Contribution to the Field	**2 (Good)**	Makes a solid contribution by bridging epistemology, conflict studies, and Nigerian politics. Offers fresh insights into narrative construction.
Technical Quality	**3 (Fair)**	Methodology is appropriate but could be more rigorous. Missing references and some methodological details reduce technical quality.
Clarity of Presentation	**3 (Fair)**	Generally well-organized, but several passages suffer from overly complex prose and grammatical errors that impede comprehension.
Depth of Research	**2 (Good)**	Demonstrates engagement with relevant literature and multiple data sources. Would benefit from more empirical depth and primary data.

DECISION: MAJOR REVISION

Rationale:

This manuscript addresses an important and timely topic with theoretical sophistication and makes a meaningful contribution to understanding the herdersmen conflict in Nigeria. The epistemological approach is innovative and the multi-theoretical framework is appropriately ambitious. However, several substantive issues require attention before publication: